

Remarks

The Examiner has made objections to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) based on language in claims 3, 8 and 9. Additional objections to previously pending claims 3-4 and 7-9 were made under 35 U.S.C. 112, and certain other claim objections were based on informalities. In that regard all previously pending claims 3-4 and 7-11 have been canceled without prejudice, and new claims 12-21 have been added by amendment. It is believed that these new claims now fully comply with the requirements of Section 112 and are fully supported by the drawings. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended to delete reference to the four applications identified by attorney docket numbers. The Examiner's objection is therefore moot.

In accordance with the Examiner's request, a new more concise Abstract has been added by amendment.

The previous rejection of claims 3-4 and 10-11 based on obviousness-type double patenting over claims 3-4 of U.S. patent No. 6,347,075 are no longer applicable in view of the claims cancellations. It is submitted that the recitation of unique features in the newly added claims are not subject to any double patenting objections.

The Examiner has rejected the previously pending claims 3-4 and 7-11 for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on the Bell and Seazholtz references. In order to advance this case to issuance, such rejected claims are canceled without prejudice, and

new claims 12-21 now emphasize and clarify features that are not disclosed or suggested in any of the cited references.

More particularly, the claims affirmatively recite, *inter alia*, a multiple access subscriber link that provides a reliable safety life line connection through line cards in second external network interface facilities in order to provide a backup communication link when a system or component failure occurs (see independent claims 12, 20 and 21).

Additional features regarding various embodiments for implementing such a life line connection are recited in dependent claims 13-19. Accordingly first external network interface facilities combine with a subscriber server to provide broadband digital processing services for various customer premise devices, while incorporating into the same subscriber link the components necessary for establishing a reliable subscriber telephone connection whenever non-functional components or faulty communication lines are detected.

No new matter has been incorporated in the amended claims, and the life line backup features in various exemplary embodiments are disclosed in detail in the specification and drawings (e.g., see Figs. 4A, 5 and 6 and the accompanying descriptions).

The "power out" references in Bell and Seazholtz are implemented in very different ways as compared to the combination of features in the amended claims. In that regard, the present invention is concerned with many different system and component failures, not merely power outages.

In view of all the foregoing, it is believed that all of the new pending claims 12-21 are patentable over the cited references and that this case is in condition for allowance, notice of which is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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